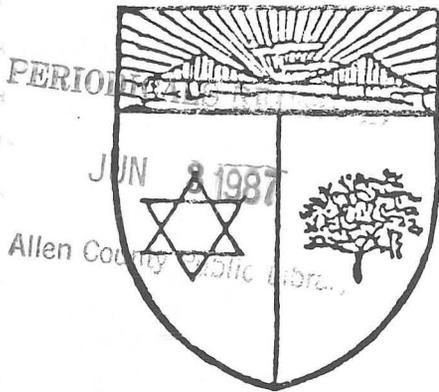


SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Martha L. Wise 1990 20th Ave.

May 1986

MAY GENERAL MEETING

DATE: MONDAY, MAY 19, 1986

TIME: 7:30 P. M.

PLACE: Fort Mason Center, Bldg C, Room 205

PROGRAM: Short business meeting, Speaker, Question and answer period, Refreshments

SPEAKER: Irvin Ungar

TOPIC: Other Genealogical Resources of a Special Kind

Rabbi Ungar has been interested in genealogy for many years now. He is a former member of the JGS in New York and has worked hard on his own genealogy with success. Naturally he still has work to do, as we all do. Family trees are never complete, the more you find the more you have to look for.

Please note that this is not the same room as we have had previously. Room 205 is further down the corridor and across the hall from the rooms we have had before.

Our last meeting brought a good turnout. It was something different and we all enjoyed it. Meeting regularly and in one place is proving to be the best way. More people are coming to meetings each time. Growth is, of course, very important. No society can survive if it does not grow and we are growing.

PENINSULA LOCAL GROUP

The Peninsula group has already set a date for their June meeting. It will be June 10th at 7:45 P.M. The details, place and subject, had not yet been determined when the date was given to us but those interested should contact Inge Campbell at 368-1617. She will have all the information.

OTHER LOCAL GROUPS

The other local groups have not yet set their June meetings and will notify those in their areas separately.

SECOND INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

The second international seminar on Jewish genealogy is now set for July of 1987. The dates will be July 5-10. It will be held in London. The program is still in the planning

stage. The first international seminar in Israel was such a success that some of those present decided more such seminars should be held in future. Since an annual international seminar was thought to be a bit too much for anyone's budget it was decided to hold them at less frequent intervals. By next year it will be three years since the first international seminar.

In 1984 in addition to the international seminar a national seminar was held a bit later in the year in Chicago. That was to allow those who could attend a national seminar but not an overseas seminar. The lucky few attended both.

Whether there will also be a national seminar next year we will not be able to tell you until after the Salt Lake City seminar. No doubt the subject will be raised there.

Meantime it would be nice if those interested in the London seminar would say so since it is very hard to plan for anything when you don't know where you stand. Actually it would no doubt also be appreciated by the planners if those who do not plan to go would state their reasons. You can write to Sallyann Amdur Sack PhD of the Washington GJS, or you can send the letters to us and we will forward them to Sallyann. Sallyann can then convey the information to all those who need to have it.

RUSSIAN CONSULAR RECORDS PROJECT

Speaking of Sallyann Sack who apparently can handle twice as much as most of us, and who is involved with this project also, reports that work is still continuing but more is yet to be done. Not surprisingly the biggest current problem is money. Both JGSs across the country and individuals have contributed generously but needless to say they always need more. Our society also made a contribution as a society and some members contributed individually.

HISTORICAL SOCIETIES MEET

We have been informed by the American Jewish Historical Society in Waltham, Mass. that there will be a National Conference of the Jewish Historical Societies in Denver, May 17-20. This is rather short notice for any of you who may be interested, but the notification arrived well after our last newsletter came out and even after our last general meeting. Sorry about that. The conference is called "The American Jewish Experience: A View from the West". Dr. Jeanne Abrams, University of Denver, Denver, Colo. 80208-0292 (303) 871-2961 can be contacted for information and the possibility of still registering if this newsletter reaches you in time for you to reach Denver by the 17th.

ILLIANA JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Illiana is the new name chosen by what began as the South Suburban Branch of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois. It was chosen to reflect the geographical area from which its membership is drawn, parts of Chicago and parts of neighboring Indiana. It also clarifies the status of Illiana as a separate entity with its own structure and by-laws. It does not indicate any rift between Illiana and its parent JGSI. It is simply a matter of growth. As our societies grow we are beginning to see them putting out new shoots. Several of the largest have grown to such an extent that they have been able to afford having members who are rather far from the center of activities split off and form new societies without reducing the parent society beyond the point of being able to function adequately.

ON THE SEPHARDIC FRONT

A bit more on Sephardic research is beginning to creep into our publications. The Pittsburgh JGS had a fine, long article recently that should be of great interest to those with Latin American roots or those with family branches that have been in Latin America for a long time. The ball is now in the court of the Sephardim. If they refuse to consider the existing JGSs on the ground that they are Ashkenazic in orientation, as of course they are, they will miss out on the chance to profit from the know-how in basic research that would be gladly shared with them. Some things are common to all research even though the later direction may vary. They are also missing out on the opportunity to bring Sephardic needs to our consciousness.

If the Sephardim just sit there complaining that the focus is on Ashkenazic genealogy and therefore there is no point in their participation, they may be the greatest losers.

It is hard to try to supply items of interest to every faction but we try. It does widen our horizons to learn about other areas of research in addition to our own. There is also a great deal to be said for belonging to a society that focuses exclusively on one's own areas of research but there is also something to be said for a group with a wider focus. In any case for the present there are, as a rule, too few with an interest in any one area for there to be separate societies for each. The day may come when we can belong to both societies that focus on all Jewish genealogy and a couple of smaller groups that focus on narrower areas. For the present we still all need each other.

SALT LAKE CITY SEMINAR

Although it is doubtful that many members of the SFBAJGS will attend the National Conference of Jewish Historical Societies in Denver, the National Seminar on Jewish Genealogy in Salt Lake will be something else again. As things are shaping up at present we should have a larger representation at this seminar than at any previous one. At the first general meeting following the seminar we will have a report on it for those who did not attend.

FINDING OUR FATHERS

Whenever we recommend books to beginners in genealogy two books are mentioned, Finding Our Fathers by Dan Rottenberg and From Generation to Generation by Arthur Kurzweil, but we must soon add that Finding Our Fathers is not easy to find. Now Finding Our Fathers, which was the first how-to book for so many Jewish genealogists, is in paperback. If you have wanted this book and not been able to find it, you can order it from Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc 1001 N. Calvert St. Baltimore, Md. 21202. The price is \$12.95 plus \$1.25 for postage and handling. If more than one book is ordered at the same time postage and handling for the additional books is 50 cents.

This is rather high. Random House originally published the book in hardback for the same price but of course that was in 1977. This book differs in many respects from the Kurzweil book. There are those who prefer this one and those who prefer the other and those who feel no genealogical library should lack either one. It is nice to know that at long last it is once more available.

YIZKOR BOOKS

The Holocaust Library at 14th Ave. & Balboa St. has some three hundred books that may or may not be exactly Yizkor books but that are at least pretty much in the same category. It would be nice to have a listing of them all to offer you but we can hardly expect the staff of the Holocaust Library, which has to spread itself rather thin as it is, to supply such a list. Perhaps someone or several someones who can spare the time will undertake to work with the library's card catalog and provide such a list. Meanwhile if you are looking for a yizkor book you can always visit the library or even call it to find out if they have the book you want. Most of the books are likely to be in Yiddish or in Hebrew as is the case with most Yizkor books.

AVOTAYNU

The most recent issue of Avotaynu contained a great deal of useful information. There were articles for those researching Belgium, France, England, Switzerland and Israel. Interesting articles and a listing of Mormon holdings of Polish Jewish records on microfilm. If you remember the listings in Toledot years ago these are much the same. Toledot also listed holdings for other places in other issues and it is to be hoped that Avotaynu will also feature listings for other countries in later issues. They now have a Family Finder column by popular request. Since Avotaynu is not only national but international, the queries reach a great many people in many places. It is a publication well worth its price.

SEPHARDIC FESTIVAL

The Berkeley/Richmond Jewish Community Center announces a week long Sephardic festival culminating in a full day of festivities Sunday June 8. There will be music, exhibits of various kinds, food etc. It should be very interesting. Judah Magnes will have an exhibit in con-

junction with the festival beginning June 4, and lasting through September. On exhibit will be Sephardic treasures from their permanent collection.

Thursday evening, June 5, there will be a panel discussion "Who are the Sephardim and Where are They From" moderated by Rabbi Kassorla and featuring three Sephardic women all of Sephardic heritage but all representing different origins. One is was born in Turkey, one in Morocco and the third represents the Jews of Iraq. There is a charge of \$5.00 for this event which includes a dessert.

Saturday, June 7, Rabbi Kassorla's sermon for the day will be "The Sephardim: Their Religious Customs". Needless to say the sermon is intended for those of us who are not Sephardic but might like to attend a Sephardic Sabbath service and learn more about Sephardim. Congr. Magain David Sephardim is at 351 4th Ave. in the middle of the block between Geary Blvd. and Clement St. Services begin at 9:00 A.M.

Sunday, June 8 is the aforementioned all day celebration of Sephardic culture. There is a \$5.00 charge for non-members, \$2.00 for seniors and children. From 11:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

PASSPORT APPLICATIONS

Morasha quotes a Milwaukee genealogical society as saying the National Archives has applications for the years from 1906 to 1926. This would seem to refer to the archives in Washington D.C. rather than to regional archives. It is surprising that such recent records are made available at all without offering proof of one's entitlement to the information. Copies are only 35 cents per page but there is a minimum \$5.00 fee. If there is a possibility that information gleaned from a comparatively recent passport application might help you it would pay to contact Washington for more complete information.

JEWISH CULTURAL FAIRE

The Santa Cruz County Jewish Community is presenting its fifth annual "faire" Sunday, June 1, at the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium. Last year Carolyn Sherfy and her husband manned a booth at this fair and we acquired some new members through that. This year again Carolyn has asked for a booth. This year some other members may go too and help. We can use all the help we can get. There is interest in genealogy in Santa Cruz but so far there is not a Jewish genealogical society.

There will be a good deal of emphasis on the early west. The theme for this year is "Lox, Lariats and Levis". They will have photographs and history of the early west, craft booths, theater, music, media presentations and of course, "good Jewish cooking."

The doors open at 10:00 A.M.

TOMBSTONE INSCRIPTIONS

Chronicles, the newsletter of the JGS of Philadelphia, had a very fine article on how to read and interpret Hebrew gravestone inscriptions. It gives the basic phrases common to Hebrew grave inscriptions, the words for some family members, in Hebrew, transliterated Hebrew and English as well as a list of the months, of numbers and information on how to determine the date from these numbers but we do not have the facility necessary to produce Hebrew characters so we cannot reproduce it for you here.

There is also advice on photographing stones to best advantage. It suggests rubbing as the best way to deal with old and weathered stones that may not come up well enough in a photograph for someone to translate the inscription for you if you cannot read Hebrew.

MEMORABILIA

Chronicles also tells us that the American Jewish Historical Society in Waltham, Mass. has a collection of old photographs, records of synagogues, cultural clubs, burial associations and the like. Apparently the American Jewish Historical Society has been doing this for 92 years. Chronicles suggests that if you have material you don't want to keep and yet do not wish to destroy because it is family memorabilia, if it pertains to American Jewish life the historical society will accept and preserve it.

Individuals may do research in the society's archives located on the campus of Brandeis University in Waltham. If contributing memorabilia interests you you may contact Dr. Nathan

ESSEN MEMORIAL BOOK

Chronicles further tells us there was a book "History and Fate of the Jews of Essen" edited by Hermann Schroter, former head archivist of Essen, published in 1980. It is in German. It contains a great deal of information for those with ancestry from Essen or the surrounding area. Unfortunately there is no master index but the chief problem is that Chronicles is not sure whether or not it is still in print.

Those interested in the Essen area may contact Jon Stein, 332 Harrison Ave. Elkins Park, Pa. 19117. Although this offer was made to members of Jon Stein's own JGS and not to the general public it would be very unlikely Jon Stein to refuse help to anyone seriously interested.

NEW ORLEANS ARCHIVES

Member Beatrice Kirshenbaum visited the New Orleans archives not too long ago seeking information on a grandfather she thought had arrived here through the port of New Orleans and struck paydirt. She reports that the archive is located on the top floor of the main library. The building is a handsome modern one and the librarians were both courteous and helpful, so if you too have a tie to New Orleans you may also find the archives a gold mine.

BRINGING POSSESSIONS FROM RUSSIA

There seems to be definite proof that the Russians do, to this day, limit the amount of money people can take with them when leaving the country, as they always have. There is even today a limit on the amount of baggage that accompanies the individual. A considerable amount may be shipped later but may not accompany the individual. Enough, according to the information given, to allow them to take all their personal belongings although they would not be permitted to take anything of special value such as a valuable painting.

Furniture does not seem to have ever been taken along nor is it shipped today. The expense would no doubt be far more than the cost of new furniture.

It may well be, as we so often hear, that a great many of those who came here had nothing to bring with them even had they been allowed to bring all they owned, but it is not true that there were no wealthy Jews as well as Jews who, if not rich, were very comfortable. They didn't necessarily stay in Russia, comfort notwithstanding, during the reign of a Czar who hated Jews and made life very difficult not to say dangerous.

BETH HATEFUTSOTH COMPUTER

Your editor has seen a copy of the forms to be filled out by those entering their family tree in the computer. For the most part the information requested is what one would expect, names, dates, places. In addition they ask whether the individual (they require a separate sheet for each individual, of course) was divorced or not, whether they were adopted, whether they had any genetic disease, whether the parents were related, religion at birth, if converted, to what they were converted and when, and whether they died fighting for Israel or whether they died in the holocaust. There is also space allowed for occupations, degrees and titles and space for comments. Presumably they have in mind compiling statistics in addition to simply recording families.

As has been reported before the charge per name entered is \$1.00 plus the \$5.00 kit one must have in order to be able to fill out the forms but they also have a charge for updating which has not previously been mentioned, \$2.00 per name.

Printed family trees may be submitted by those who do not wish to fill out the forms but the charges are double.

When we hear more from those who are submitting information to Beth Haefutsoth we will let you know.

ORDAINED RABBIS

In the diaspora with no priests descended from the priestly tribes, rabbis who might or might not be of priestly descent, became the ones to minister to the religious needs of the

the community. Seminars and formal ordination are of comparatively recent origin dating only from the nineteenth century. Prior to that in order to fulfill the duties of a rabbi a man had to have his qualifications verified by the proper rabbinic authorities and there were formalities with roots going back to Babylon and beyond, but a rabbi didn't receive his ordination from a central training institution and he often had to earn a living in a more mundane fashion.

You may well find someone referred to as a rabbi and then be surprised to discover that he was a businessman, albeit a learned one.

Hebrew Union College kindly sent a long article photocopied from the Encyclopedia Judaica discussing the whole subject from biblical times on but it is much too complicated for lay-people to comprehend. At least for this one.

In most European countries Jews were long considered to be an alien people whose affairs should be adjudicated by their own authorities for the most part. True, the Jewish population often had been in the country for centuries but citizenship was very late in coming. Meanwhile much of Jewish life was regulated by the rabbis. The chief rabbis had enormous authority over their own areas. For serious matters that would have been adjudicated by a civil court had they not concerned two Jews, a Beth Din might be called. Less serious squabbles might be adjudicated by the local rabbi and perhaps the community elders.

In one case in which more than one Beth Din had failed to find for either side, a rabbi who was part of one of the last rabbinical courts that tried in vain to settle this case, went home and built himself a fine new study which he had decorated with a humorous mural depicting a group of rabbis standing around a table plucking the feathers from a fat goose. The goose of course, represented the plaintiff at whose expense so many rabbis had feathered their nests since it was money poorly spent. The case was never resolved. It was just finally dropped.

Needless to say the Jews were not allowed to break the civil law and there were cases when civil law intervened but rabbis had a great influence on the life of the Jewish community in the centuries prior to the granting of citizenship to all natives including Jews.

PARNASSIM

In Germany, at least, the Parnassim played a very important role in the life of the Jewish community. They were the lay leaders of the community, the elders. It was an important position. Today the word is scarcely known except to those more versed in religious matter than most of us. If a man was a parnas he was usually a man of standing in the community and generally a man of means.

Does anyone know if this held true in other countries as well?

TRANSLATION GUIDE FOR POLISH RESEARCHERS

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois is offering a translation guide for the genealogist that lists words commonly found in 19th century Polish vital records. It is organized by subject and there are alphabetical lists in both Polish/English and English/Polish. There are reproductions and translations of actual documents and much that should be of great interest to those trying to cope with Polish records although they do not speak Polish. This book can be ordered by sending to Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois, % Judith R. Frazin, President, 1025 Antique Lane, Northbrook, Ill. 60062. The price is \$12.50 including postage.

NEW YORK RESEARCHER

Laurie Thompson, 490 West End Ave, New York, N.Y. 10024 advertises her willingness to research New York directories, the state census, marriage birth and death records and wills. For an estimate a SASE is requested.

ENUMERATION OF THE JEWS OF FRAUSTADT

Judith A. Walters, P.O. Box 129, Bothwell, Washington 98041 is offering "The 1846 Enumeration of the Jews of Fraustadt, Prussia", published 1981. 159 households with names, birth-dates, places and maiden names. \$8.25. Could this be Fraustadt a town in Posen or Poznan according to which country, Germany or Poland, controlled it at the time?

MEMBERS FORUM

Genealogical Symbols- by Walter Hertzmann

Abbreviations serve many purposes in genealogical work. The most obvious is to save space. In saving space we often forget legibility and the ability to communicate with others. Like formats used by many genealogists they were designed by others, are easy to copy, but often do not communicate well.

Since the suggestion was made in the newsletter months ago, I investigated and finally adopted for my own use, the European system. Why? you may ask. I found that the abbreviations fit with ease into typewritten or longhand correspondence and can be used for computer work as well. The symbols were understood by professional and overseas genealogists without explanation and gave the printed sheet on which they were used a less confusing appearance. The final result was that my compilations were read with more interest. I use the following standard abbreviations: * born, + died, oo joined in marriage.

In addition I use ca for circa and () to signify that a date is believed to be correct, but at this point in time cannot be proven.

With all of the above I achieve my communication and presentation standards which are part of how I do my work. I thought you might be interested.

Editor's note: At times you may find the double rings intertwined. You may also find a tiny coffin used in place of the plus sign or the original cross which you will still find used in longhand quite often. Circa is latin for "about" and ca. is used commonly for uncertain dates of any sort, not just genealogy. Walter Hertzmann is right. If these symbols were used internationally, not to mention nationally, it would be all to the good.

SHARING CORNER

FAMILY FINDER

G-1 Lillian Gleicher, P.O. Box 1636, Cambria, Calif. 93428 (805) 927-3067

Seeking ancestors of the Balter family, Elias Balter of Mariupol (a seaport on the Sea of Azov) Russia, and his father Boris, who never came to this country.

Elias, his sister Henrietta, and brother Sol, were brought to New York in 1907 by their mother, Elizabeth. They joined older children of the family, Leon, Anna, Bertha and William who were already settled in Bridgeport, Conn.

Also seeking the Rustinbouski family, probably from Lithuania. Some members of this family shortened the name to Rustin in this country. One branch was dubbed Rosenberg by immigration.

S-1 Carolyn L. Sherfy, 918 Willow St. Alameda, Calif. 94546 (415) 521-8593

Searching for all descendants and ancestors of the Cohen, Sachs (Saks), Diamand and Abramovitz (Abramavitz) families of Kovno Gubernia, Lithuania and later of St. Louis, Mo. Also need information on Fred Schwartz who died in Portland, Or. early in this century. A daughter Frieda or Fanny, married a Bombeck. The two sons were Alfred and Harold.

5-6 Stan Stein, 2171 Bay St. San Francisco, Calif. 94123 (415) 921-3769

Seeking the Mondral family of Razanow, Poland. Simon Mondral, circa 1820-1900, never left Poland. In America Mondral became Monroe.

Also seeking information on the family of Moshe Saphirstein, birthplace unknown, lived in Razanow.

Also searching for Abraham Saphirstein of Rypin Poland, The name became Stein in this country.

W-2 Martha L. Wise, 1990 20th Ave. San Francisco, Calif. 94116 (415) 564-9927

Looking for the descendants of Friedchen Hess and her husband Joseph Michael, of Hamburg, Germany. They were married in 1823. Their children were Jacob, Michael, Bernard, Dina, Rosalie and Sophie. The latter two daughters married relatives on their mother's side and both had the married name of Hess. Although none of these ever left Germany presumably their descendants did after Hitler came to power.

JEWISH HISTORY ATLAS

This atlas contains 121 maps covering 4,000 years of the saga of the Jewish people. It traces world-wide migrations, achievements, history covering the period from Mesopotamian times to the present.

Another atlas is the Atlas of Russian History. The period covered is 1648-1917. This atlas shows Russian expansion, its wars and politics and makes clear how Polish Jews came under Russian rule.

Both volumes contain useful information and are recommended by Gertrude Ogushwitz' column in Avi Avot.

They can be obtained for \$5.98 each from Barnes and Noble Bookstores, 126 Fifth Ave. New York, N.Y. 10011. Include \$2.50 postage and handling for each volume ordered.

One can ask to be placed on their mailing list although what sort of books they carry is not stated.

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